

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for facilitating a sale of debt accounts between a seller and one or more potential buyers, the method comprising:
 - 5 a) creating a computer readable database comprising data pertaining to a plurality of debt accounts, each account comprising a plurality of data fields;
 - b) grouping the accounts into at least one lot based upon at least one correlation among the data in the data fields;
 - c) searching the computer readable database for information
10 corresponding to information designated by the potential buyers;
 - d) receiving one or more purchase offers for one or more lots from the potential buyers; and
 - e) communicating the purchase offers to the seller.
2. The method of Claim 1 further comprising the step of uploading at least a
15 portion of the computer readable database to a medium accessible via a computer network.
3. The method of Claim 1 further comprising the step of informing the potential buyers when at least some of the designated information has been found in the searching step.
- 20 4. The method of Claim 1 further comprising the step of receiving from the seller an acceptance of a purchase offer, whereby a purchase contract is formed between the seller and the buyer.
5. The method of Claim 4 wherein each purchase offer has a purchase price

associated therewith, the method further comprising the step of transmitting debt accounts to the buyer upon receipt by the seller of the purchase price associated with the accepted purchase offer.

5 6. The method of Claim 1 wherein each debt account is in a standardized format.

7. The method of Claim 1 wherein the step of grouping the accounts further comprises the step of receiving from the seller a designation of at least one criterion by which the accounts are to be grouped into lots.

10 8. The method of Claim 1 further comprising the step of recording data relating to searches made by the potential buyers into a computer readable search database.

9. The method of Claim 8 further comprising the step of searching the search database for information corresponding to information designated by the seller.

10. The method of Claim 8 further comprising the steps of:

15 a) uploading at least a portion of the computer readable search database to a medium accessible via a computer network; and

 b) searching the uploaded portion of the computer readable search database for information corresponding to information designated by the seller.

20 11. The method of Claim 8 wherein the step of grouping accounts into one or more lots is based upon criteria including information derived from the search database.

12. The method of Claim 1 further comprising the step of recording data relating to purchase offers made by the potential buyers into a computer

readable purchase offer database.

13. The method of Claim 12 further comprising the step of searching the computer readable purchase offer database for information corresponding to information designated by the seller.

5 **14.** The method of Claim 12 further comprising the steps of:

f) uploading at least a portion of the computer readable purchase offer database to a medium accessible via a computer network; and

10 g) searching the uploaded portion of the computer readable purchase offer database for information corresponding to information designated by the seller.

15. The method of Claim 12 wherein the step of grouping accounts into one or more lots is based upon criteria including information derived from the purchase offer database.

15 **16.** The method of Claim 1 further comprising the step of recording data relating to each sale into a computer readable sale database.

17. The method of Claim 16 further comprising the step of searching the computer readable sale database for information corresponding to information designated by the seller.

18. The method of Claim 16 further comprising the steps of:

20 f) uploading at least a portion of the computer readable sale database to a medium accessible via a computer network; and

g) searching the uploaded portion of the computer readable sale

database for information corresponding to information designated by the seller.

19. The method of Claim 16 wherein the step of grouping accounts into one or more lots is based upon criteria including information derived from the sale database.

5 **20.** The method of Claim 1 further comprising the step of associating a proposed sales contract with each lot.

21. The method of Claim 1 further comprising the step of scrapping one or more lots and regrouping accounts into one or more new lots conforming to a purchase offer.

10 **22.** The method of Claim 1 further comprising the step of scrapping one or more unsold lots and regrouping accounts into one or more new lots.

23. The method of Claim 1 further comprising the steps of:

f) receiving from the seller rejections and counteroffers in response to offers from the potential buyers; and

15 g) communicating the rejections and counteroffers to the potential buyers.

24. The method of Claim 1 further comprising the steps of:

f) receiving from the seller at least one criterion that a purchase offer must satisfy to be considered by the seller; and

20 g) automatically rejecting any purchase offers from the potential buyers that do not satisfy the specified criteria.

25. The method of Claim 1 further comprising the steps of:

f) establishing a deposit account for a potential buyer, the deposit account including a balance designating an amount of funds available to the potential buyer;

g) receiving one or more purchase offers from the potential buyer,
 5 each purchase offer having a purchase price associated therewith, wherein each purchase price may be for an amount less than or equal to the balance of the deposit account;

h) adjusting the balance for the potential buyer's deposit account by deducting from the balance the purchase price associated with each purchase
 10 offer; and

i) notifying the buyer if a purchase price exceeds the amount of the balance.

26. The method of Claim 25 further comprising the step of rejecting a purchase offer if the purchase price exceeds the amount of the balance of the
 15 deposit account.

27. A computer readable medium having stored therein instructions for causing a central processing unit to execute the steps of the method of Claim 1.

28. A method for facilitating a sale of debt accounts between a seller and one or more potential buyers, the method comprising:

20 a) creating a computer readable database comprising data pertaining to a plurality of debt accounts, each account comprising a plurality of data fields;

b) grouping the accounts into a plurality of lots based upon at least one correlation among the data in the data fields;

c) establishing a deposit account for at least one of the potential buyers, the deposit account including a balance designating an amount of funds available to the potential buyer;

d) searching information in the computer readable database for
5 information corresponding to information designated by the potential buyers;

e) receiving a plurality of purchase offers from a potential buyer having a deposit account, each purchase offer having a purchase price associated therewith, wherein each purchase price may be for an amount less than or equal to the balance of the deposit account;

10 f) communicating the purchase offers to the seller;

g) receiving an acceptance of a purchase offer from the seller;

h) calculating a new balance for the deposit account by deducting from the deposit account the purchase price associated with the purchase offer accepted by the seller; and

15 i) withdrawing any of the buyer's pending purchase offers for which the associated purchase price exceeds the amount of the new balance.

29. A method for facilitating a sale of debt accounts between a seller and one or more potential buyers, the method comprising:

a) creating a computer readable database comprising data pertaining
20 to a plurality of debt accounts, each account being in a standardized format comprising a plurality of data fields;

b) receiving from the seller a designation of at least one criterion by which the accounts are to be grouped into lots, the criterion including at least one

correlation among the data in the data fields;

c) grouping the accounts into at least one lot based upon at least one correlation among the data in the data fields;

d) associating a proposed sales contract with each lot;

5 e) uploading at least a portion of the computer readable database to a medium accessible via a computer network;

f) searching the uploaded portion of the computer readable database for information corresponding to information designated by the potential buyers;

10 g) informing the potential buyers when at least some of the designated information has been found in the searching step;

h) receiving purchase offers from potential buyers, wherein each purchase offer has a purchase price associated therewith;

i) communicating the purchase offers to the seller;

15 j) optionally scrapping one or more lots and regrouping accounts into one or more new lots conforming to a purchase offer;

k) receiving from the seller an acceptance of a purchase offer;

l) optionally scrapping one or more unsold lots and regrouping accounts into one or more new lots; and

20 m) transmitting debt accounts to the buyer upon receipt by the seller of the purchase price associated with the accepted purchase offer.

30. A device for facilitating a sale of debt accounts between a seller and a buyer of one or more potential buyers, the device comprising:

a memory storing a computer readable database comprising data pertaining to a plurality of debt accounts, each account comprising a plurality of data fields; and

a processor operatively connected to the memory, the processor
5 programmed to:

- (a) group the accounts into at least one lot based upon at least one correlation among the data in the data fields;
- (b) search information in the computer readable database for information corresponding to information designated by the
10 potential buyers;
- (c) receive one or more purchase offers for lots from the potential buyers; and
- (d) communicate the purchase offers to the seller.

31. The device of Claim 30 wherein the processor is further programmed to
15 upload at least a portion of the computer readable database to a medium accessible via a computer network.

32. The device of Claim 30 wherein the processor is further programmed to inform the potential buyers when at least some of the designated information has been found in the search of the computer readable database.

20 33. The device of Claim 30 wherein the processor is further programmed to receive from the seller an acceptance of a purchase offer, whereby a purchase contract is formed between the seller and the buyer.

34. The device of Claim 33 wherein each purchase offer has a purchase price

associated therewith, and wherein the processor is further programmed to transmit debt accounts to the buyer upon receipt by the seller of the purchase price associated with the accepted purchase offer.

5 **35.** The device of Claim 30 wherein each debt account is in a standardized format.

36. The device of Claim 30 wherein the processor is further programmed to receive from the seller a designation of at least one criterion by which the accounts are to be grouped into lots.

10 **37.** The device of Claim 30 wherein the processor is further programmed to record data relating to searches made by the potential buyers into a computer readable search database.

38. The device of Claim 37 wherein the processor is further programmed to search the search database for information corresponding to information designated by the seller.

15 **39.** The device of Claim 37 wherein the processor is further programmed to:

 upload at least a portion of the computer readable search database to a medium accessible via a computer network; and

 search the uploaded portion of the computer readable search database for information corresponding to information designated by the seller.

20 **40.** The device of Claim 37 wherein the processor is further programmed to group accounts into one or more lots based upon criteria including information derived from the search database.

41. The device of Claim 30 wherein the processor is further programmed to

record data relating to purchase offers made by the potential buyers into a computer readable purchase offer database.

42. The device of Claim 41 wherein the processor is further programmed to search the computer readable purchase offer database for information
5 corresponding to information designated by the seller.

43. The device of Claim 41 wherein the processor is further programmed to:

upload at least a portion of the computer readable purchase offer database to a medium accessible via a computer network; and

search the uploaded portion of the computer readable purchase offer
10 database for information corresponding to information designated by the seller.

44. The device of Claim 41 wherein the processor is further programmed to group accounts into one or more lots based upon criteria including information derived from the purchase offer database.

45. The device of Claim 30 wherein the processor is further programmed to
15 record data relating to each sale into a computer readable sale database.

46. The device of Claim 45 wherein the processor is further programmed to search data the computer readable sale database for information corresponding to information designated by the seller.

47. The device of Claim 45 wherein the processor is further programmed to:
20 upload at least a portion of the computer readable sale database to a medium accessible via a computer network; and

search the uploaded portion of the computer readable sale database for

information corresponding to information designated by the seller.

48. The device of Claim 45 wherein the processor is further programmed to group accounts into one or more lots based upon criteria including information derived from the sale database.

5 **49.** The device of Claim 30 wherein the processor is further programmed to associate a proposed sales contract with each lot.

50. The device of Claim 30 wherein the processor is further programmed to scrap one or more lots and regroup accounts into one or more new lots conforming to a purchase offer.

10 **51.** The device of Claim 30 wherein the processor is further programmed to scrap one or more unsold lots and regroup accounts into one or more new lots.

52. The device of Claim 30 wherein the processor is further programmed to:
receive from the seller rejections and counteroffers in response to offers from the potential buyers; and

15 communicate the rejections and counteroffers to the potential buyers.

53. The device of Claim 30 wherein the processor is further programmed to:
receive from the seller at least one criterion that a purchase offer must satisfy to be considered by the seller; and

20 automatically reject any purchase offers from the potential buyers that do not satisfy the specified criteria.

54. The device of Claim 30 wherein the processor is further programmed to:
establish a deposit account for a potential buyer, the deposit account

including a balance designating an amount of funds available to the potential buyer;

receive one or more purchase offers from the potential buyer, each purchase offer having a purchase price associated therewith, wherein each
5 purchase price may be for an amount less than or equal to the balance of the deposit account;

adjust the balance for the potential buyer's deposit account by deducting from the balance the purchase price associated with each purchase offer; and

notify the buyer if a purchase price exceeds the amount of the balance.

10 **55.** The device of Claim 54 wherein the processor is further programmed to reject a purchase offer if the purchase price exceeds the amount of the balance of the deposit account.

56. A system for facilitating a sale of debt accounts between a seller one or more potential buyers, the system comprising:

15 means for creating a computer readable database comprising data pertaining to a plurality of debt accounts, each account comprising a plurality of data fields;

means for grouping the accounts into at least one lot based upon at least one correlation among the data in the data fields;

20 means for searching the computer readable database for information corresponding to information designated by the potential buyers;

means for receiving one or more purchase offers for one or more lots from the potential buyers;

means for communicating the purchase offers to the seller.

57. The system of Claim 56 further comprising means for uploading at least a portion of the computer readable database to a medium accessible via a computer network.

5 **58.** The system of Claim 56 further comprising means for informing the potential buyers when at least some of the designated information has been found in the search of the computer readable database.

59. The system of Claim 56 further comprising means for receiving from the seller an acceptance of a purchase offer, whereby a purchase contract is formed
10 between the seller and the buyer.

60. The system of Claim 56 wherein each purchase offer has a purchase price associated therewith, the system further comprising means for transmitting debt accounts to the buyer upon receipt by the seller of the purchase price associated with the accepted purchase offer.

15 **61.** The system of Claim 56 wherein each debt account is in a standardized format.

62. The system of Claim 56 further comprising means for receiving from the seller a designation of at least one criterion by which the accounts are to be grouped into lots.

20 **63.** The system of Claim 56 further comprising means for recording data relating to searches made by the potential buyers into a computer readable search database.

64. The system of Claim 63 further comprising means for searching the

search database for information corresponding to information designated by the seller.

65. The system of Claim 63 further comprising means for:

uploading at least a portion of the computer readable search database to
5 a medium accessible via a computer network; and

searching the uploaded portion of the computer readable search database for information corresponding to information designated by the seller.

66. The system of Claim 63 further comprising means for grouping accounts into one or more lots is based upon criteria including information derived from
10 the search database.

67. The system of Claim 56 further comprising means for recording data relating to purchase offers made by the potential buyers into a computer readable purchase offer database.

68. The system of Claim 67 further comprising means for searching the
15 computer readable purchase offer database for information corresponding to information designated by the seller.

69. The system of Claim 67 further comprising means for:

uploading at least a portion of the computer readable purchase offer database to a medium accessible via a computer network; and
20 searching the uploaded portion of the computer readable purchase offer database for information corresponding to information designated by the seller.

70. The system of Claim 67 wherein the means for grouping accounts into one

or more lots is based upon criteria including information derived from the purchase offer database.

71. The system of Claim 56 further comprising means for recording data relating to each sale into a computer readable sale database.

5 **72.** The system of Claim 71 further comprising means for searching the computer readable sale database for information corresponding to information designated by the seller.

73. The system of Claim 71 further comprising means for:

uploading at least a portion of the computer readable sale database to a
10 medium accessible via a computer network; and

searching the uploaded portion of the computer readable sale database for information corresponding to information designated by the seller.

74. The system of Claim 71 wherein the means for grouping accounts into one or more lots is based upon criteria including information derived from the sale
15 database.

75. The system of Claim 56 further comprising means for associating a proposed sales contract with each lot.

76. The system of Claim 56 further comprising means for scrapping one or more lots and regrouping accounts into one or more new lots conforming to a
20 purchase offer.

77. The system of Claim 56 further comprising means for scrapping one or more unsold lots and regrouping accounts into one or more new lots.

78. The system of Claim 56 further comprising means for:

a) receiving from the seller rejections and counteroffers in response to offers from the potential buyers; and

b) communicating the rejections and counteroffers to the potential
5 buyers.

79. The system of Claim 56 further comprising means for:

a) receiving from the seller at least one criterion that a purchase offer must satisfy to be considered by the seller; and

b) automatically rejecting any purchase offers from the potential
10 buyers that do not satisfy the specified criteria.

80. The system of Claim 56 further comprising means for:

establishing a deposit account for a potential buyer, the deposit account including a balance designating an amount of funds available to the potential buyer;

15 receiving one or more purchase offers from the potential buyer, each purchase offer having a purchase price associated therewith, wherein each purchase price may be for an amount less than or equal to the balance of the deposit account;

adjusting the balance for the potential buyer's deposit account by
20 deducting from the balance the purchase price associated with each purchase offer; and

notifying the buyer if a purchase price exceeds the amount of the balance.

81. The system of Claim 80 further comprising means for rejecting a purchase offer if the purchase price exceeds the amount of the balance of the deposit account.

5 / 82. A method for facilitating a sale of an item between a seller and a buyer, the method comprising:

a) receiving from at least one seller information pertaining to a plurality of items to be offered for sale;

b) establishing a deposit account for the buyer, the deposit account including a balance which designates an amount of funds available to the buyer;

10 c) communicating to the buyer at least a portion of the information pertaining to the items to be offered for sale;

d) receiving a plurality of purchase offers from the buyer, each purchase offer having an item and purchase price associated therewith, wherein each purchase price may be for an amount less than or equal to the balance of the deposit account;

15 e) communicating the pending purchase offers to each seller;

f) receiving an acceptance of a purchase offer from a seller;

g) calculating a new balance for the buyer's deposit account by deducting from the deposit account the purchase price associated with the offer;

20 and

h) withdrawing any of the buyer's pending purchase offers for which the associated purchase price exceeds the amount of the new balance.

/ 83. A device for facilitating a sale of an item between a seller and a buyer, the

device comprising:

a memory storing data received from at least one seller identifying a plurality of items to be offered for sale; and

5 a processor operatively connected to the memory, the processor programmed to:

- (a) establish a deposit account for the buyer, the deposit account including a balance which designates an amount of funds available to the buyer;
- 10 (c) communicate to the buyer at least a portion of the data pertaining to the items to be offered for sale;
- (d) receive a plurality of purchase offers from the buyer, each purchase offer having an item and purchase price associated therewith, wherein each purchase price may be for an amount less than or equal to the balance of the
15 deposit account;
- (e) communicate the pending purchase offers to each seller;
- (f) receive an acceptance of a purchase offer from a seller;
- (g) calculate a new balance for the buyer's deposit account by deducting from the deposit account the purchase price
20 associated with the offer; and
- (h) withdraw any of the buyer's pending purchase offers for which the associated purchase price exceeds the amount of the new balance.

84. A system for facilitating a sale of an item between a seller and a buyer, the system comprising:

means for receiving from at least one seller information pertaining to a plurality of items to be offered for sale;

5 means for establishing a deposit account for the buyer, the deposit account including a balance which designates an amount of funds available to the buyer;

means for communicating to the buyer at least a portion of the information pertaining to the items to be offered for sale;

10 means for receiving a plurality of purchase offers from the buyer, each purchase offer having an item and purchase price associated therewith, wherein each purchase price may be for an amount less than or equal to the balance of the deposit account;

means for communicating the pending purchase offers to each seller;

15 means for receiving an acceptance of a purchase offer from a seller;

means for calculating a new balance for the buyer's deposit account by deducting from the deposit account the purchase price associated with the offer; and

20 means for withdrawing any of the buyer's pending purchase offers for which the associated purchase price exceeds the amount of the new balance.

85. A method for facilitating a sale of an item between a seller and a buyer, the method comprising:

a) receiving from at least one seller information pertaining to a

plurality of items to be offered for sale;

b) establishing a spending limit for the buyer, the spending limit including a balance which designates an amount of funds available to the buyer;

c) communicating to the buyer at least a portion of the information
5 pertaining to the items to be offered for sale;

d) receiving a plurality of purchase offers from the buyer, each purchase offer having an item and purchase price associated therewith, wherein each purchase price may be for an amount less than or equal to the balance of the spending limit;

10 e) communicating the pending purchase offers to each seller;

f) receiving an acceptance of a purchase offer from a seller;

g) calculating a new balance for the buyer's spending limit by deducting from the spending limit the purchase price associated with the offer;
and

15 h) withdrawing any of the buyer's pending purchase offers for which the associated purchase price exceeds the amount of the new balance.

86. A device for facilitating a sale of an item between a seller and a buyer, the device comprising:

a memory storing data received from at least one seller identifying a
20 plurality of items to be offered for sale; and

a processor operatively connected to the memory, the processor programmed to:

plurality of items to be offered for sale;

b) establishing a spending limit for the buyer, the spending limit including a balance which designates an amount of funds available to the buyer;

c) communicating to the buyer at least a portion of the information
5 pertaining to the items to be offered for sale;

d) receiving a plurality of purchase offers from the buyer, each purchase offer having an item and purchase price associated therewith, wherein each purchase price may be for an amount less than or equal to the balance of the spending limit;

10 e) communicating the pending purchase offers to each seller;

f) receiving an acceptance of a purchase offer from a seller;

g) calculating a new balance for the buyer's spending limit by deducting from the spending limit the purchase price associated with the offer;
and

15 h) withdrawing any of the buyer's pending purchase offers for which the associated purchase price exceeds the amount of the new balance.

28. A device for facilitating a sale of an item between a seller and a buyer, the device comprising:

a memory storing data received from at least one seller identifying a
20 plurality of items to be offered for sale; and

a processor operatively connected to the memory, the processor programmed to:

- (a) establish a spending limit for the buyer, the spending limit including a balance which designates an amount of funds available to the buyer;
- (b) communicate to the buyer at least a portion of the data pertaining to the items to be offered for sale;
- (c) receive a plurality of purchase offers from the buyer, each purchase offer having an item and purchase price associated therewith, wherein each purchase price may be for an amount less than or equal to the balance of the spending limit;
- (d) communicate the pending purchase offers to each seller;
- (e) receive an acceptance of a purchase offer from a seller;
- (f) calculate a new balance for the buyer's spending limit by deducting from the spending limit the purchase price associated with the offer; and
- (g) withdraw any of the buyer's pending purchase offers for which the associated purchase price exceeds the amount of the new balance.

87. A system for facilitating a sale of an item between a seller and a buyer, the system comprising:

means for receiving from at least one seller information pertaining to a plurality of items to be offered for sale;

means for establishing a spending limit for the buyer, the spending limit

including a balance which designates an amount of funds available to the buyer;

means for communicating to the buyer at least a portion of the information pertaining to the items to be offered for sale;

means for receiving a plurality of purchase offers from the buyer, each
5 purchase offer having an item and purchase price associated therewith, wherein each purchase price may be for an amount less than or equal to the balance of the spending limit;

means for communicating the pending purchase offers to each seller;

means for receiving an acceptance of a purchase offer from a seller;

10 means for calculating a new balance for the buyer's spending limit by deducting from the spending limit the purchase price associated with the offer; and

means for withdrawing any of the buyer's pending purchase offers for which the associated purchase price exceeds the amount of the new balance.